

Accidental capture and landing of whale shark, *Rhincodon typus* (Smith, 1828) and tiger shark, *Galeocerdo cuvier* (Peron and Le Sueur, 1822) by trawlers at New Ferry Wharf, Mumbai

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Rhincodon typus commonly known as whale shark is a pelagic species. Though whale shark is the largest fish, it mainly feeds on plankton. They are locally called as 'dev mushi' or 'bhari' in Maharashtra. Whale shark is listed as an endangered

species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN Red List, 2000) and is also included in the Appendix II of CITES since 2003. There is no regular fishery for this species in India except in Gujarat. They are

occasionally trapped in different gears such as trawlnet and gillnet.

A female whale shark measuring 3.1 m and weighing approximately 0.4 t was caught by a trawler from a depth of 45-65 m and was landed at New Ferry Wharf on 23-03-09 (Fig. 1 and 2). The present report is probably the smallest recorded specimen of whale shark from Maharashtra waters. The auction that followed realised an amount of



Fig. 1. Lateral view of whale shark, *Rhincodon typus* landed at New Ferry Wharf



Fig. 2. Front view of *R. typus* landed at New Ferry Wharf

Rs. 10,000/-. The liver was removed for extracting oil and the rest of the body was utilised for salt curing.

A female *Galeocerdo cuvier* commonly called as tiger shark and locally known as 'waghbeer' in Maharashtra was landed by a trawler at New Ferry Wharf on 17-01-09 (Fig. 3 and 4). It was caught from a depth of 45-65 m. Usually they occur upto depths of 140 m.



Fig. 3. Dorsal view of the tiger shark, *Galeocerdo cuvier* landed at New Ferry Wharf



Fig. 4. Ventral view of *G. cuvier* landed at New Ferry Wharf

The tiger shark which measured 4.2 m in total length, is probably the largest record from Maharashtra waters and weighed approximately 1.1 t. The auction realised an amount of Rs.26,000/-. The fins fetched a very high value.

Earlier records of landings of whale sharks and tiger sharks from Maharashtra waters are given in Tables 1 and 2.

Table 1. Records of landings of whale shark from Maharashtra waters

Date of capture	Landing centre	Gear	Depth of capture (m)	Total length (m)	Weight (t)	Reference
08-01-80	Cuffe parade, Mumbai	Gillnet (Tarti jal)	13	7.6	--	Karbhari (1986)
21-11-83	Cuffe parade, Mumbai	Gillnet (Wagra jal)	33	12.2	11.0	Karbhari and Josekutty (1986)
10-11-85	Cuffe parade, Mumbai	Gillnet	30	5.0	5.0	Shriram (1986)
21-02-92	Makarabagh, Malvan	Trawl-net	40	5.0	0.5	Maikar (1992)
16-03-93	Cooperage, Mumbai	Gillnet	--	6.7	3.7	Shriram <i>et al.</i> (1994)
30-09-95	Madaban, Ratnagiri	Stranded	--	20.8	--	Katkar (1996)
21-12-99	Dakti, Dhanu	Gillnet (Wagra jal)	40	6.3	1.8	Kamble and Rane (2001)
23-12-04	Versova, Mumbai	Trawl-net	45-65	10.6	2.0	Jadhav <i>et al.</i> (2005)
23-03-09	New Ferry Wharf, Mumbai	Trawl-net	45-65	3.1	0.4	Present report

Table 2. Records of landings of tiger shark from Maharashtra waters

Date of capture	Landing centre	Gear	Depth of capture (m)	Total length (m)	Weight (t)	Reference
20-04-85	Cruise trip off Maharashtra (6 specimens caught)	Hook and line	300	2.0-3.8	up to 0.1	Arvindakshan (1988)
25-02-03	Sasoon Docks, Mumbai	Gillnet	30-35	4.1	1.1	Katkar and Kamble (2003)
13-09-03	New Ferry Wharf, Mumbai	Trawl-net	40-45	3.9	--	Shriram and Katkar (2004)
16-09-03	New Ferry Wharf, Mumbai	Trawl-net	40-45	4.1	--	Shriram and Katkar (2004)
04-03-04	Sasoon Docks, Mumbai	Gillnet	25-30	3.7	0.2	Josekutty <i>et al.</i> (2004)
16-03-04	New Ferry Wharf, Mumbai	Gillnet	30-35	3.4	0.3	Josekutty <i>et al.</i> (2004)
23-03-09	New Ferry Wharf, Mumbai	Trawl-net	45-65	4.2	1.2	Present report